Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Radio Service

OFFICE OF INFORMATION
RECEIVED
★ SEP 14 1931 ★
U. S. Department of Agriculture

File 2
1.9
En 3Ht h

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, Sept. 21, 1931

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Canning Meat". Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Publications available: "Cooking Cured Pork" and mimeographed directions for Canning Poultry.

--ooOoo--

Most of my daily mail makes me very happy. It pleases me that so many letters come in asking household questions and it gives me a very pleasant feeling when I read how many of you enjoy the cookbook and like to listen to our chats.

But now and then along comes a letter that disturbs me, because it needs an answer on the dot -- sooner than I can answer it either over the air or with a postage stamp. One like that came in a day or two ago. It was about canning meat. I was very glad to be asked about that subject. But, just the same, the letter disturbed me. Canning meat, as most of us know, may be a great saving. It may be a means of supplying the family with a most important food at low cost and of putting it up in convenient form to be served on short notice.

But canning meat may also be very unsafe, if it is done in the wrong way. Meat, fish, and poultry are non-acid foods, and as we've mentioned often, such foods must be canned with the greatest care to avoid the dangerous germ of botulism which may develop in them.

However, when fresh, clean meat is packed in clean, air-tight containers, sealed properly and sterilized in a steam-pressure canner for the right length of time and at the right temperature, micro-organisms are killed and the meat is prevented from spoiling. Then it is a safe and delicious food.

I thought all these facts over when I read that letter the other day. It came from a homemaker in South Dakota. But, wait. Where is that letter? I'll read it to you .

"Dear Aunt Sammy": I am coming to you with a question that I would like answered as soon as possible since I'm sure it would help me and other housekeepers too. Some of my neighbors are canning ground meat or sausage in half gallon and gallon syrup pails. They pack the meat in the pails raw and then roast the pails in the oven several hours. Then they put the cover on and the lard seals the pail. This seems to be a quick way of canning meat, but is it safe?"

Well, I'm sure you can see why that letter worried me and why I decided to have a chat on canning meat at my very first opportunity.

I'll begin by answering the question that was asked at the end of the letter.

Is this quick, syrup-pail, oven-heating method of canned meat safe?

The answer is: No. Far from it.

Now I'll ask a question. Why is this a dangerous method?

Answer: Because the heat in the oven is not high enough to sterilize the meat and because the syrup pails are unsuitable containers. In the first place, they are too large to be sure of heating through, and, second, they cannot be sealed properly.

Would you like to hear just exactly how meat may be canned for safety?

First have every single utensil that you will need for the process assembled before you start. Remove any excess fat and bone from the raw meat. Then cut it into pieces that will fit into the jars or cans, whichever you use. Heat the meat through. You can do it by simmering in water enough to cover it, or in the oven. Without delay fill the jars or cans with the hot meat. Add salt -- about 1 teaspoon to each pint is a good amount. Now pour boiling liquid over the meat in the jars, enough to cover the meat and come within about a half inch of the top of the jar. This liquid will be either the water in which the meat was simmered, or the drippings from the pan in which it was heated, diluted with boiling water. Now, if you are using tin cans, seal them. If you are using glass jars, partially seal them. And process at once in the pressure cooker. And, by the way, it is safest to use pint jars or cans of sizes 1, 2 or 2 1/2. You will be surer of sterilizing without overcooking in the smaller containers.

Another good method that may be used is to cut the raw meat into pieces of convenient size. Then fill the cans, and place them in a bath of boiling water which comes up to one or one and a half inches of the tops of the cans. Continue heating in this bath until the meat is steaming hot. This will require forty minutes to one hour. No liquid is added in this case, as the meat makes its own juice. Seal the cans at once and process without delay.

Here's a final word of advice. It pays to work rapidly in canning meat so that the meat does not cool between precooking and processing. The time and pressure used in processing depends on the mat.

These principles hold for canning meat or poultry. If you want directions for canning poultry for your files, send to the Bureau of Home Economics.

"What would you like for your Monday dinner?" inquired the Menu Specialist the other day when we were having our last conference on meals for the family.

"I was thinking about some sliced baked ham that I once tasted," I said, "Ham baked with pineapple."

The Menu Specialist looked pleased. That encouraged me.

"And," I ventured again, "some Southern friends of mine have taught me to enjoy sweet potatoes with baked ham. How about having baked sweet potatoes, since the oven is to be used anyway?"

The Menu Specialist nodded approval. So I made another suggestion.

"As for a vegetable, what would you think of creamed cauliflower?"

"I'd like that," she said. "Ham and pineapple, sweet potatoes, and creamed cauliflower. Very nice, Aunt Sammy."

"Thank you. Now since I'm started, may I go on and finish the meal? Don't you think a combination dessert and salad would suit this menu? After that main course I'll be in the mood for something fresh, colorful, crisp, tart and sweet all at once. And that means just one thing to me -- a handsome fruit salad with marshmallows cut up in it served on crisp green lettuce leaves."

The Menu Specialist gave her O.K. to that dinner, so I'm sure it's all right. A slice of ham baked with pineapple; Baked sweet potatoes; Creamed cauliflower; and Fruit salad with tart-sweet cooked salad dressing. There's a recipe for that salad dressing in your new green cookbook and also in the egg leaflet.

That reminds me of another recent letter. The writer asks if boiled salad is good for one. Well, the time was when we boiled eggs. Nowadays food specialists believe in cooking them instead --- cooking just below the boiling point. So we speak of hard and soft cooked eggs. This is also the case with cooked salad dressing made with eggs. The approved kind is made in the upper part of the double boiler where it cooks but does not boil. Is it good for one? Yes, indeed. It's good for one or two or the whole family.

You will need just six ingredients for the baked ham slice with pineapple. Shall I list them?

A thick slice of ham
1/2 cup of brown sugar
1/2 cup of bread crumbs
1 teaspoon of prepared mustard
3/4 cup of pineapple juice, and
5 or 6 slices of canned pineapple

There they are. Please check as I repeat them (Repeat.)

Have the slice of ham cut about 1 inch thick. Trim off the rind and the lean edge. Dry out a piece of the fat in a heavy skillet. Brown the ham on both sides and transfer it to a shallow baking dish. Pour off the fat from the pan drippings and, with the remainder in the skillet, mix the sugar, crumbs, mustard and pineapple juice. Cover the ham with this mixture and bake without a lid in a very moderate oven (300 degrees F.) for about one hour. Baste the ham occasionally.

About 15 minutes after the ham is put in the oven, arrange the pineapple slices -- cut in halves -- in another shallow baking dish, and pour over them some of the liquid from the ham. Bake the pineapple slowly at 300 degrees F. for about 45 minutes. Turn the slices during the cooking. Serve the pineapple around the ham.

Tomorrow we'll talk about getting the houseplants ready for winter.